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## Book Reviews

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## BOOK REVIEWS

*Colossal Hamilton of Texas.* By John L. Waller. El Paso (Texas Western Press), 1968. pp. xii, 152. \$5.00.

This book presents an adequate and long needed biography of Andrew Jackson Hamilton, who is remembered for the most part as having served as provisional governor of Texas during the period of presidential reconstruction in Texas. The author narrates the story of Hamilton from his arrival in Texas as a young lawyer from Alabama in 1846 to the time of his death at 60 in 1875. An imposing figure and eloquent speaker, he was to be a significant figure on the Texas political scene for many years. Always a leader, Hamilton was a Unionist in Congress when the Civil War began. His political sympathies were so unpopular in Texas that he fled for his life to Mexico after the state entered the war. Hamilton, however, left Mexican soil for Louisiana in 1862 after New Orleans fell into Union hands. While at New Orleans, Lincoln appointed him Brigadier General of Volunteers and Military Governor of Texas. These appointments proved to be empty honors, for he was an executive without a state and a general without a force. Yet Hamilton was not forgotten by President Andrew Johnson who appointed him provisional governor of Texas in June, 1865. At Austin Hamilton, acting in line with the President's plan of reconstruction, called a constitutional convention into session where the Confederate debt was repudiated and the secession ordinance was nullified. However, he was unable to obtain a ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment. Still the people adopted the constitution, choosing at the same election J. W. Throckmorton, a former Confederate officer to be governor of Texas.

Private life was not to hold Hamilton long. Less than two years later, he was appointed an assistant justice of the "Military Supreme Court" while Texas was a part of the Fifth Military District. In 1869, Conservative Republican Hamilton lost the race for the governor's office to E. J. Davis, a Radical Republican, in an election where irregularities in balloting were evident. Hamilton, in the months that followed, was convinced that the Davis administration was oppressive and he was quite vocal in expressing his bitterness toward it. Still Hamilton remained loyal to his party through the few remaining years of his life.

*Colossal Hamilton of Texas* contributes to the history of the period of reconstruction in Texas, and Waller uses his sources well. The book is designed by Carl Hertzog and is edited by S. D. Myres.

William Curtis Nunn  
Texas Christian University

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*Guns smoke in the Redlands.* By Joe F. Combs. San Antonio (The Naylor Company), 1968. 122 pp. Illustrations. \$5.95.

Joe F. Combs, the author of *Legends of the Pineys*, *Farm Corner*, and *Growing Pastures in the South*, is a prolific writer; and like many writers who have had the public ear for a long time, he has been known to bend it with his "good-old-days" moralizing and his generalizations on evolution. *Guns smoke in the Redlands*, however, contains the best of his writing and research, and I strongly recommend it to those interested in East Texas history and the phenomenon of the blood feud.

The history of mankind is larded with misunderstandings that became grudges that became wars. The mean look and the bad word escalated to a nudge, then a shove, and finally men and nations reached for their clubs, pikes, or pistols and proceeded to enforce their animosities by bloodying the opposition. But one does not have to pluck a field to smell a flower, and a close view of a microcosm can be as revealing as a set of Cambridge histories. Joe Combs depicts this microcosm of military escalation in his study of San Augustine's Border-Wall feud, that erupted into open street warfare in 1900 and lasted till 1904.

As is the case with most wars, the feud's beginnings are but dimly remembered. The Walls and the Borders clashed as children, and their anger heated and hardened as they grew from fists to guns. The Populist victory of 1895 put Uncle Buck Wall's family and faction in power, with his son George as sheriff. Old line Confederates fell in with Curg Border, the Brooks family, and the Democratic opposition, and shades of the Civil War haunted the courthouse square.

Fort Sumpter came again when Sheriff Wall jailed Curg Border for disturbing the peace. Four days later, on April 21, 1900, Curg put a load of buckshot in George's back. In retaliation for George's murder, Eugene, his brother, shot Ben Brooks in the back on the following June 1.

George's brother-in-law and deputy, Noel Roberts, was appointed by the Populist commissioners as the next sheriff. On June 4, Noel, his brother Sidney and his uncle Felix were fired upon in the courthouse by Curg, Frank Sharp, and Lum Crouch. A short vicious battle left Sidney and Felix dead and Noel badly wounded. The sheriff was able to escape to Nacogdoches, where he recovered.

The Borden-Brooks faction was now in command and demanded the arrest of Eugene Wall for the murder of Ben Brooks. Uncle Buck had over two hundred men ready to fight for him, so the arrest was delayed until the following year when a Texas Ranger went to Wall's house, arrested him, and took him to Rusk for trial in June, 1901. To pay court costs, Eugene's brother Lopez began a cattle drive to the Nacogdoches market in June 9. On June 10 he was shot out of his saddle from ambush. The trial itself was a farce and Eugene was acquitted, but within the year, he was shot and killed from ambush. Uncle Buck took what was left of his family and moved to Oklahoma.

Curg Border, the main gun in the Wall opposition, rode high with the Walls out of his way and became the sheriff in 1903. His election was the turning point of the whole bloody episode. The majority of San Augustine's citizens were people of moderation who were distressed and frightened by the violence of the feud, but they were so upset by the election of Curg that they began to organize for action. On March 3, 1904, a court order replaced Sheriff Border with Sneed Noble, a neutral. Curg swore that he would kill Sheriff Noble, but he met his match in a main street showdown when Sneed and his brother met Curg, his gun-toting sister Cora, and his Negro gun, Arch Price. Sneed met the trio in the middle of the street, emptied Curg's saddle, and sent the other two flying.

This was the end of the shooting part of the war as far as the citizens were concerned and should have been the end of the book, but Combs had evidently been sitting on the stories of the Runnels and Truitt murders and the Conners-Lowe feud for so long that he felt it was time to hatch them. The three final



chapters break the unity of the book. I am sorry that he did not research the Connors story as well as he did the Wall feud and write a book about it. It is a tragedy in the most classical sense. And the Truitt story has a manhunt that lasted twenty-one years. It too is worth a book, and Combs should be the man to write it.

Francis Edward Abernethy  
Stephen F. Austin State University

*J. Frank Dobie: Bibliography.* Compiled by Spruill Cook. Waco (The Texian Press), 1968. 64 pp. \$5.00.

J. Frank Dobie began publishing in 1919 and produced books and articles with regularity until his death in 1964. He was a professional writer, and he got a lot of miles out of everything that he wrote. Some stories began as talks, became scholarly articles, were later published in newspapers and magazines, and finally came to rest (except for later revision and anthologizing) in one of his many books. Dobie's writings are widely distributed and scattered over nearly fifty years of print.

Frank Dobie's place in Southwestern literature is unquestioned and unrivaled, and students of the lore will be studying him and his subjects for years to come. Spruill Cook, a member of the faculty of Navarro College in Corsicana and a long-time Dobie scholar, has compiled a descriptive Dobie bibliography that will be of great assistance to these future folklorists, historians, and Dobie scholars.

Mr. Cook's bibliography lists the books, pamphlets, prefaces, introductions, and magazine articles, as well as a select group of secondary sources. It also lists the publications of the Texas Folklore Society, which survived through the vitality of Dobie; quotations from his dedications; and title pages from eight of his first editions. Cook's bibliography is an important contribution to Southwestern scholarship.

Francis Edward Abernethy  
Stephen F. Austin State University

*The Texas Diary, 1835-1838.* By Mary Austin Holley. Austin (The University of Texas Press), 1965. 120 pp. Photographs. \$7.50.

James Perry Bryan, a well-known Texas historian, edited and introduced this first publication of Mary Austin Holley's diary of her second and third visits to Texas. Although her travels were confined to the Coastal Plains near the mouth of the Brazos, her record of them is a valuable sequel to her book *Texas* which was published after her first visit in 1831. Both provide some of the first credible descriptions of Texas in this important period.

Mrs. Holley reveals herself as a versatile and intelligent woman, and her wit and sensitivity render the diary not unpleasant reading. However, its real value as seen by Mr. Bryan, "... lies in the glimpse it gives us of many of the prominent Texans of the colonial period and of the early Republic and in its intimate description of the means of transportation, living conditions, and political and social activities during the infancy of Texas—as well as its description of some of the principal communities then in existence in Texas." Reproductions of Mrs.

Holley's fifteen sketches of various homes and buildings of the area further enhance the book. Mr. Bryan's painstaking notes should not be overlooked in judging the value of this publication.

Martha P. Hoskins  
Nacogdoches, Texas

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"I'm Frank Hamer," *"The Life of a Texas Peace Officer"*, By John H. Jenkins and H. Gordon Frost. Introduction by Colonel Homer Garrison. Austin (The Pemberton Press), 1968. \$7.50.

John H. Jenkins and H. Gordon Frost have written the story of perhaps Texas' most colorful peace officer, Frank Hamer. Colonel Homer Garrison says in his introduction to this interesting book that Frank Hamer experienced a transition in law enforcement. As a young Texas ranger Hamer experienced frontier conditions and his transportation was by horseback. Before his death he, as the criminals he sought, traveled by automobile. The transition from the horseback trail-following officer to a "highly knowledgeable specialist—part detective, part scientist, and thoroughly modern lawman" was a long and difficult path.

Frank Hamer was born March 17, 1884, in western Texas. While he was still a child his family moved to a ranch in San Saba County where Frank grew up around his father's blacksmith shop. His first profession was that of cowboy, and while a young man he was tempted to become an outlaw.

Hamer was a lawman by nature. His very instinct was that of law enforcement. He detested civil or military officials who winked at the law. As a ranger he refused to obey an order to make a farce out of an arms embargo against Mexico. Later in prohibition days as a prohibition enforcement officer he refused to overlook violations of the liquor laws and helped send his superior to prison.

Hamer was noted for his honesty, his courage, and the fact that he made careful plans before making an arrest. In 1928 the Texas Banker's Association, a powerful organization in the state of Texas, became alarmed at the growing number of bank robberies and the failure of the courts to convict or punish the accused robbers. In an attempt to solve the problem the banker's organization published posters which read:

"REWARD"  
FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS FOR  
DEAD BANK ROBBERS NOT A  
CENT FOR LIVE ONES"

About a month later two officers killed two men who were apparently planning to rob a bank in Odessa. In a short time afterward two potential robbers were killed at Rankin, and there were killings in other Texas towns. The Texas Banker's Association was pleased and paid the awards in each instance. Frank Hamer, however, felt uneasy about the situation and confided his suspicions to Walter Prescott Webb. The circumstances involving the killings appeared peculiar to him, and he became convinced that the robberies and killings were framed. He attempted to get legal action against the men who were engineering the killings, but accomplished nothing. He then appealed to the banker's association but the association was adamant; and Hamer later gave his story to the



press. In this action he was opposing an organization that represented most of the wealth of Texas, but following his leadership, the public outcry finally became so great that the association modified the rewards according to Hamer's demands.

Hamer was known as a brilliant law enforcement officer before he accepted the task from Lee Simons, the general manager of the Texas Prison System, of tracking down Clyde Barrow and Bonnie Parker. Hamer spent 102 days on this case which came to an end on May 23, 1934, near Arcadia, Louisiana. It had been agreed among the six officers, four from Texas and two from Bienville Parish, Louisiana, that Barrow and Bonnie would be taken alive if possible. The trap worked perfectly; but when the order was given for Clyde and Bonnie to throw their hands up, instead they reached for their guns and when they did, the six officers shot as a unit. There was talk of merging the rangers with the highway patrol and Hamer's success in tracking down Barrow and Parker may have prevented the merger of the two agencies.

Hamer, a modest man who never sought publicity, refused many flattering offers for moving pictures, books and magazine rights to his story. When such a request was made, he always answered that after his death his family could do what they wished about a biography. Hamer was said to be as communicative as an oyster and the fact that he did not talk, and his sense of honor, prevented him from revealing how he obtained the information which enabled him to be a successful officer. This lack of information is a distinct loss to the science of law enforcement and it would also be interesting reading to the layman. Walter Prescott Webb "ranked Hamer with Jack Hayes and Ben McCulloch as one of the three most fearless in western history."

The authors often rely on clippings found in the Hamer family collection when the clipping would have lead to original sources which could have been used as references.

There are over one hundred pages of illustrations. The pictures would have been more interesting if more identification had been given. Often only Captain Hamer is identified.

C. K. Chamberlain

Stephen F. Austin State University

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*President Wilson Fights His War: World War I and the American Intervention.*

By Harvey A. DeWeerd. New York and London (The MacMillan Company) 1968. Pp. xxi, 457, maps, illustrations, and appendixes, \$12.50.

In this excellent volume of "The Wars of the United States" series, Harvey A. DeWeerd provides a detailed, though compact, history of the First World War in its major aspects and places America's role in the conflict in perspective. As the author points out in his preface, "World War I was predominantly a European War," and the European nations were fully engaged for four years. The United States engaged in large-scale military operations for only a few months—at the termination of the struggle. Any effort to present the American war effort in a vacuum or to explain the European war "as a mere background" for America's Great Crusade inevitably results in distortion. It is DeWeerd's purpose to re-dress the imbalance.

Basing his study on a variety of materials: manuscripts, government documents, printed sources, secondary accounts, and personal memoirs, DeWeerd has presented a clear and readable story of the "Great War" from its origins to the armistice. Without bogging the reader down in unnecessary detail, the author describes the campaigns and major battles with verve and dash, providing simple maps to illustrate the action. In addition to the principal efforts on the Western front, DeWeerd also provides adequate accounts of the action on the Eastern front, the Gallipoli Campaign, and the War at Sea. As the war progresses, he also discusses and evaluates the plans and performance of the war leaders, both of the Central Powers and Allies. By 1917 both sides were seeking new weapons and techniques to end the trench warfare stalemate and regain a war of movement.

In discussing the American war effort, the author dismisses the mobilization on the home front in a few pages. This is a weakness, but attention is deliberately concentrated on the military and the fighting fronts. He points to the contributions of Secretary of War Newton D. Baker, whom he describes as "one of the greatest Secretaries of War in our history," and Chief-of-Staff Peyton C. March. These men were outstanding in their work to form, equip, and arm the A.E.F. Without their achievements, the American Army could hardly have arrived in Europe in time or in condition to have affected the outcome of the struggle. Wilson is described as an able war President who largely "evaded his duties as Commander-in-Chief." He delegated large powers to General John J. Pershing and Admiral William S. Sims. To Baker he largely gave a free hand. DeWeerd finds Pershing a "hard, taciturn, competent general," who efficiently prepared his troops for combat, and successfully resisted Allied proposals for the amalgamation of the American Army. Pershing's concept of the "expert stalking rifle-man" contributed little to strategical or tactical ideas of the war, yet the A.E.F. essentially accomplished what he set out for it to do. Had the war gone on it would have played a leading role in the campaign of 1919.

This is an interesting book. For the general reader or the general student, Professor DeWeerd has written a well-planned study of the madness that we call World War I. In comparison with the efforts and sacrifices of the principal belligerents, the United States played a rather modest role in that struggle.

Robert S. Maxwell

Stephen F. Austin State University

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*Country Music, U.S.A.* By Bill C. Malone. Austin (University of Texas Press), 1969. xii 422. Photographs, bibliography, index. \$7.50.

Any area of scholarship would be proud of Bill Malone's publication, and it will take just this caliber of research to prize open the doors to the halls of academe wide enough for country-and-western music to get in. Folk music, with the help of such scholars as Francis Child and Cecil Sharp, has finally received academic blessing; and the best universities in the western world admit it as their legitimate own, but country and western still has a while to stand in the hall and wait.

*Country Music, U.S.A.*, by Bill Malone, is the climax of a growing scholarly interest in this long neglected field of music. Besides numerous articles in music



magazines over the last five years c/w has been the subject of one issue of the *Journal of American Folklore* and of a popular publication by Robert Shelton, entitled *The Country Music Story*, but nothing equal to the scope and depth of Malone's work has yet appeared.

*Country Music, U.S.A.* is a chronological account of the evolution of a musical species within the rapidly changing environment of the last fifty years. Malone does not make his study under laboratory conditions or in a sociological vacuum. He recognizes that the music and the people who sing it are one unit, inseparable, and he analyzes its shifting shape as the study of people singing and making music out of their experiences.

Country-and-western music grew out of the folk songs of the rural South, out of the songs the settlers brought from the old country and the songs they made after they got here. They played for themselves and for the entertainment of their own kind. They played the fiddle, guitar, banjo, and mandolin, and they sang a high nasal harmony that they carried over from their gospel and Sacred Harp music. Although they sang about every part of their lives, most of their songs were mournful, sin conscious, and fatalistically sad.

Radio discovered that there was an audience for country music in the early 'twenties, and stations like WSB, Atlanta, and WBAP in Fort Worth began combing the woods for rural talent. The market that was created through radio paid off in 1923 when Fiddlin' Eck Robertson cut a record that was to open up that medium for the dissemination of country music. The term "hillbilly," which came to be applied to all kinds of country music, was taken from Al Hopkins' Hillbillies, who were recording country music in 1925. Then in the late 'twenties Jimmie Rodgers yodeled and recorded his way into the number-one singing position, which he still holds for many c/w fans.

The recording industry thrived in the late 'twenties and 'thirties and had a large field of talent to draw from. Jimmie Rodgers' commercial success inspired many country musicians to try their hands in the business world of radio and recordings. The Depression spread the country music of the South across the southwest to California and to wherever the Okies, Arkies, and Texans went looking for work. These years saw the advent of the "western" part of country and western as Gene Autry and his ilk sang their ways into Saturday matinees throughout the U.S.A. Bob Wills, his Texas Playboys, and western swing came in on the coat-tails of that movement.

World War II spread country and western all over the world. If a soldier had one small drop of country in him, the songs that complimented his nostalgia were country and western, and he sang them and spun them on juke boxes wherever he went.

Bill Monroe with Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs came on strong after the war, and the flying sound of Scruggs-style banjo set the style for later bluegrass bands. Elvis Presley began his career singing country and western, but cut off the main line under the influence of Negro "race" music. A romantic return to the past in the post-war forties also spawned Burl Ives and the folk music interest that is still with us in spite of the Kingston Trio.



Amplification and commercialization are the main changes that have come about since the war. The Nashville promoters realized that they were mining a mother lode and did their best to pander to every shift in the public's taste. Many c/w stars went right along with them, sprinkling pearls and sequins on their costumes, wiring their strings for multi-sound, and adding drums and electric organs to get with the rock-and-roll beat.

Country-pop and the Nashville sound can be bad, and it is probably a new musical genre that is not country at all, but country-and-western (Old Style) is saved by the real stars of the field, by such singers as Hank Williams, Webb Pierce, Hank Snow, Ray Price, and Charlie Pride. These are some of the ones who have kept the old sound and the realism—or naturalism—of country and western music. The best of c/w is close to life and represents unsophisticated man involved in a hard-case existence on an elemental level. The heroes are the hard drinkers, fighters, and lovers whose lives' intensity carried them into turbulent and tragic experiences. It speaks to an adult world.

It is refreshing to read folk music scholarship written by a man who has something to offer in addition to the academic knowledge. Bill Malone was born into an East Texas tenant-farm-family that was part of the folk music culture. His mother was a singer in the Pentacostal gospel tradition, both his older brothers played guitars, his father was a square-dance caller, and he is a guitar picker and country singer. He was one of the lucky few who was able to write his doctoral dissertation about something in which he was genuinely interested and well prepared for, and this was one of the few dissertations worth publishing.

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